

REGULAR GEOMETRY TOWARDS EFFECTIVE VISITORS WAYFINDING: A
CASE STUDY OF KLCC VICINITY

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ABSTRACT

In developed cities, large office buildings occupy the city centre thereby destroying the legibility of these areas. These areas confront with a lack of visibility and difficult cognitive map. As a regular spatial configuration, Squares have had an effect on the characteristics of urban space such as intelligibility, synergy and accessibility. The goal of this study is to identify the importance of geometry of space on legibility, cognitive map of visitors and wayfinding. Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) was chosen as a case study because of its historical and cultural significance. Importance should be placed on its preservation for the future especially for tourists. A model of KLCC has been developed within the square that combines streets and KLCC area. It has been used as proof of the concept for a Space Syntax model network analysis using axial analysis and observations. Meanwhile, this study investigates the views of visitors including 86 respondents using surveys and interviews. Results show that there is a negative correlation between cognitive map and urban stress. Furthermore, all quantitative and qualitative data suggest viable cognitive map due to applying regular geometry may strongly improve legibility. The results show that there was a moderate positive correlation between legibility and regular geometry in general. On the other hand, existing geometry had a negligible effect on legibility. The role of the square suggestion is more immediate in high integration in the vicinity of KLCC. Moreover, the square can provide context for PETRONAS Twin Tower as landmark and symbolic building. Square as regular geometry is a good way to increase viable cognitive map. It affects the legibility of urban space where wayfinding will more strongly confirm that visitors display sociability and accessibility interaction. An implication for architects, tourism managers and urban designers is that square as a regular geometry associated with landmarks increases legibility. As a result, viable cognitive map by regular geometry is associated with easy wayfinding which decreases stress.

ABSTRAK

Di bandar- bandar yang telah membangun, bangunan-bangunan besar yang berada di pusat bandar telah menyukarkan kebolehbacaan kawasan ini. Kawasan ini berhadapan dengan kekurangan penglihatan dan peta kognitif yang sukar. Sebagai konfigurasi ruang biasa, dataran mempunyai kesan ke atas ciri-ciri ruang bandar seperti kejelasan, sinergi dan kemudahan. Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti kepentingan geometri ruang pada kebolehbacaan, kognitif peta pengunjung dan wayfinding. Pusat Bandar Kuala Lumpur (KLCC) telah dipilih sebagai kajian kes kerana kepentingan sejarah dan budaya. Kepentingan harus diletakkan pada pemuliharaannya yang sangat penting untuk generasi akan datang terutamanya bagi para pelancong. Model KLCC telah dibangunkan dalam dataran yang menggabungkan jalan-jalan dan kawasan KLCC. Ia telah digunakan sebagai bukti konsep untuk menganalisis rangkaian model Space Syntax menggunakan analisis paksi dan pemerhatian. Sementara itu, kajian ini menyiasat pandangan pengunjung termasuk 86 responden menggunakan kaji selidik dan temu bual. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang negatif di antara peta kognitif dan tekanan bandar. Tambahan pula, semua data kuantitatif dan kualitatif mencadangkan peta kognitif berdaya maju kerana menggunakan geometri tetap boleh meningkatkan kebolehbacaan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat korelasi yang sederhana antara kebolehbacaan dan geometri tetap secara umum. Sebaliknya, geometri yang sedia ada mempunyai kesan yang boleh diabaikan pada kebolehbacaan. Peranan cadangan dataran mempercepatkan integrasi yang tinggi di sekitar KLCC. Selain itu, dataran boleh menyediakan konteks untuk Menara Berkembar PETRONAS sebagai mercu tanda dan bangunan simbolik. Dataran adalah salah satu cara yang bagus sebagai geometri tetap untuk meningkatkan kebolehan peta kognitif. Ia memberi kesan kepada kebolehbacaan ruang bandar di mana petunjuk arah atau bacaan lebih kuat mengesahkan bahawa pengunjung menunjukkan sikap suka bergaul dan saling berinteraksi. Implikasi bagi pengurus pelancongan, pereka bandar dan arkitek adalah dataran itu sebagai geometri biasa dikaitkan dengan mercu tanda meningkatkan kebolehbacaan. Hasilnya, kebolehan peta kognitif oleh geometri biasa dikaitkan dengan petunjuk arah yang mudah serta mengurangkan tekanan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MDBC	-	Malaysian Dutch Business Council
KLCC	-	Kuala Lumpur City Centre
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNWTO	-	World Tourism Organization
H	-	Hypotheses
CVK	-	Configuration of Vicinity of KLCC
RG	-	Regular Geometry
IG	-	Irregular Geometry
EF	-	Effective Wayfinding
RQ	-	Research Question
Fr	-	Frequency
Fr(M)	-	Frequency of more than three weeks
Fr(F)	-	Frequency of fewer than three weeks
Fr(T)	-	Frequency of total
Ref	-	Reference

LIST OF SYMBOLS

N	-	number of nodes in the space syntax graph
K	-	the shortest depth from i to k
Mdepth	-	Mean depth map
R	-	Integration
Rn	-	Global scale integration (Radius=10KM in this study)
R2	-	Local scale integration (Radius=2KM)
R3	-	Local scale integration (Radius=3KM)
N	-	Number
M	-	Mean
SD	-	Standard Deviation
p(p-value)	-	Significance level
F(F-test)	-	Statistical test in which the test statistic has an F- distribution under the null hypothesis
ANOVA	-	Analysis of variance
%	-	Percentage
T-Test	-	A method of statistical inference using data from a scientific study
R ²	-	Coefficient of determination

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- Accessibility - In Space Syntax, accessibility is defined by integration which is determined as nearness centrality from origin to destination.
- Axial map analysis - Axial map analysis explains the behaviour of people into a pattern of urban spaces. This method illustrates social urban space analysis and treatment of people together by computer simulation
- Cognitive map - Cognitive map is an internal representation of what visitors have perceived from the environment
- Connectivity - Connectivity means the number of streets that are connected to a Specific Street.
- Depth - Depth is stated as the number of steps to reach all other nodes from node i in the space syntax graph.
- Geometry - Geometry is a framework that allows elements to be organized and arranged into a pattern. It also shows the relationship between elements.
- Integration - Integration shows how many turns have to be made from an origin to reach all other destination in the city, using shortest routes.
- Intelligibility - Intelligibility is the degree of perception of the environment that is directly related to legibility.
- Legibility - The legibility of a route is the ease with which a route can become known or how easily people can understand it.
- Space syntax - Space syntax is a method for reading urban spaces which is an association between physical structure and social structure.
- Synergy - Correlation between local integration and global integration is called synergy.
- Wayfinding - Wayfinding is a dynamic behaviour that is the act of travelling from origin to destination by decision making, using cognitive map

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Wayfinding follows psychological patterns using perception (Emo et al., 2012). External information of urban space such as environmental configuration may affect wayfinding decision making (Conroy, 2001). Evidence has shown that impaired wayfinding effect on visitors includes disorientation. Disorientation involves the egocentric spatial sphere, representation of heading, lack of landmark and viable cognitive function agnosia (Bottoni et al., 1990; Suzuki et al., 1998; Aguirre and D'Esposito, 1999; Asselena *et al.*, 2005). Visitors rely on certain wayfinding which might be a stressful experience when people are in an unfamiliar environment (Hölscher et al., 2006).

City centres have traditionally attractions for both international and local visitors. Urban areas provide a series of tourism and travel related attractions that are varied in nature but highly focused in location. City centres offer exceptional chance for visitors whose main purpose is meeting other people or institutions .Their purpose of visit might be different for business or leisure or personal (Vandermeij, 1984) .Because of high potential of visitors for connecting people, mixed cultures and experiences with place and consumption, it must create an exciting and excellent exploration for visitors without stress (Edwards, Griffin et al., 2008).

Beside the importance of morphology in urban design and architecture (Gospodini, 2001) the wayfinding and accessibility for visitors in city are significant

factors. Tóth and Dávid (2010) called the accessibility as a key element for visitors in city. In other hand, the studies related to accessible urban tourism (Darcy and Dickson, 2009; Tóth and Dávid, 2010; Hano, 2011; Więckowski, Michniak et al., 2014) have focused mostly on transportation accessibility and accessibility for disabled , elderly and children in cities from touristic perspective. Wayfinding is another key element for visitors of urban areas.

Wayfinding is purposeful movement to a specific destination (Golledge, 1999). Humans use two strategies in wayfinding: Euclidian geometry as direction and distance estimates associated with cognitive map (Golledge, 1999, Kitchin and Freundschuh, 2000) and use landmark strategy (Burgess, 2006). Xia, Arrowsmith et al. (2008) Highlights that visitors apply different methods for wayfinding and urban managers should offer complementary materials to help them in wayfinding.

In search for an appropriate urban theory to help urban regeneration for assisting the visitors in urban areas, we may consider different theories of urban researchers in 21th century. The desired theory for this purpose should have significant role in urban design and regeneration.

The variables used in this study are physical properties and characteristics of vicinity of KLCC (e.g. geometry, integration, connectivity, choice, intelligibility and synergy) and psychological properties (legibility, cognitive map and urban stress).

1.2 Background of the Study

Wayfinding had been a concern for all people, from nomadic to sedentary. Our ancient ancestors found his/her route based on signs and symptoms such as trees, rocks and other visual elements, and represented thematically in his/her mind. Wayfinding as a complex psychological process has been debated in different scientific disciplines (Afrooz, 2009; Najafpour, 2012).

Early wayfinding research (Mallot and Basten, 2009; Wiener et al., 2009; Vilar et al., 2013) focused on general characteristics and role of landmarks (Caduff and Timpf, 2008; Zakzanis et al., 2009). Other wayfinding-related research includes studies based on age (Head and Isomc, 2010; Newcombe et al., 2010), gender (Mueller et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2009; Piccardi et al., 2011) of wayfinder, variety of materials, colour (Spence et al., 2006), or on interior space such as airports, shopping malls, galleries (Lam et al., 2003). Despite these works, the literature is almost silent on unfamiliar urban space and their relationship with the spatial behaviour of tourists as visitors (Edwards and Griffin, 2013).

Much research has focused on the role of stress on the cognitive map (Pruessner et al., 2010; Allen et al., 2013; Schwabe and Wolf, 2013;). In wayfinding, cognitive map have been studied in geometry and stress (Lee et al., 2012; Mohsenina and Sevtsukb, 2013; Schwabe and Wolf, 2013). Although researcher's focus on cognitive map (Weisman, 1981; Ga' rling et al., 1986) and wayfinding (O'Neil, 1991a; O'Neil, 1991b) has increased lately, a review of space-syntax method (Karimi, 2012) for reading urban spaces, based on wayfinding literature, reveals relatively little theoretical work in the area. In other hand, geometry was only used in experiments on rats to determine the impact of geometry on wayfinding (Yaski and Eilam, 2007; Yaskia et al., 2011; Yaski et al., 2012). The current study attempts how wayfinding influences by geometry and how it affects urban stress.

1.3 Statement of the Problems

Evidence has shown that legibility, cognitive map and Geometry as effective elements of urban space affect wayfinding but there is little investigation about these elements of urban space simultaneously on wayfinding.

Due to the complex nature of cities, visitor behaviour in urban space within cities is not well understood (Edwards and Griffin, 2013). Past research on the cognitive mapping has concentrated on animals and young children. The literature is almost silent on urban spaces and their relationship with visitors. Consequently, we

have an incomplete picture of how to improve cognitive mapping of visitors in urban spaces and as a result reduce their stress.

Geometry can create a variety of unseen forms. Regular geometry is effective in human navigation (Lee et al., 2012). Irregular geometry in today's urban space, especially developed cities and cosmopolitan areas has a negative influence on viable cognitive map. On the other hand, wayfinding is difficult to confront.

Golledge (1999) stated that cognitive mapping has a very important role in wayfinding. Cognitive mapping is fundamental to wayfinding. He also stated that it is the internal representation of the environment and the perception of them. A study on cognitive mapping is how information gathered from the environment and perception are used to make decisions when approaching destinations in daily life (Hong, 2007). Wayfinding is based on completing the internal representation of relationship between spaces as cognitive map (Allen, 1999). Cognitive map affect our daily life for wayfinding. Human navigation involves reaching destinations with increased perception (Hölscher et al., 2011). Unfamiliar environment and lack of human scale in a development city are affected by negative cognitive map.

Legibility is a kind of comfort that includes identifiable paths (Lynch, 1960). A legible city is defined as an area which it has landmarks or routes as part of the configuration of urban space that are known easily understood and can be grouped easily in all patterns (Lynch, 1960).

The physical structure of built environment can shape legibility of urban space and human behaviour. Regular and coherent physical configuration of urban space affects the ease with which routes can be recognized in all environments but irregular structures result in difficult perception (Yaski et al., 2012). Regular geometry of urban space can make routes legible. However, an irregular urban space with an impressive dominant landmark can be legible (Yaski et al., 2012).

Increasing numbers of visitors are exposed to the irregular geometry of urban space where the increasing number of skyscrapers is destroying landmarks (Etienne

et al., 1998; Etienne, 2003). On the other hand, regular geometric design may differ from the urban design used in the development of a city (Lee et al., 2012).

Lack of proper wayfinding in unfamiliar space, and beyond the human scale of developed city, creates stress for visitors. Stress can be beneficial in the short term for humans but it is harmful and can cause serious illness if the body does not have a chance to rest (Atkinson et al., 1996). Research has shown that stress, irritation and fatigue are very closely related (Kaplan, 1990; Dinan, 1996; Klingberg and Larson, 2001; Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003).

Grahn and Stigsdotter in 2003 observed that in modern society stress and stress-related diseases are a common ailment of all people. In the twentieth century, architects began to include consideration of public health standards in their designs. Western planners in towns and cities also began to consider plans that reduced stress in individuals (Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003). Research has shown that the human body involuntarily responded to natural elements and health effects but artefacts of elements such as residential or commercial towers and streets, especially with today's streets that are designed for cars solely, do not have a positive impact on human health (Ulrich, 1984, 1993, 1999).

1.4 Aim of Study

The goal of this study is to identify the importance of the geometry of urban space on legibility and to discover how it effects the cognitive map of visitors in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur City Centre, enabling visitors to overcome the difficulty of urban stress due to wayfinding. For this aim, a twofold purpose is defined:

- i. The study investigates the attitudes of visitors to Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) using an Explanatory Design method. This study attempted to determine the views of these visitors towards the geometry, legibility, cognitive map and urban stress of KLCC.

- ii. The study evaluates and compares of wayfinding behaviour by observation and simulation; that is, the effects of square suggestion on factors such as accessibility and sociability because the existing space of KLCC Park on cognitive map and wayfinding varies within and across configuration of space.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

More specifically, this study aimed to achieve the following specific research objectives:

- i. To investigate the relationship between cognitive map, legibility and geometry
- ii. To identify effects of regular geometry on cognitive map and urban stress
- iii. To compare the relationship between spatial syntactical variables and accessibility of streets in existing and square suggestion model

1.6 Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between legibility, cognitive map and geometry?
- ii. What is the implication of regular geometry on cognitive map and urban stress?
- iii. What is the effect of square as regular geometry on effective wayfinding?

1.7 Hypotheses of study

Regular geometry and unity of design affect the legibility of urban space helping to form a viable cognitive map. Moreover, wayfinding for locals and visitors in the city will be easy thus reducing the stress of visitors in an unfamiliar space. This will be illustrated in terms of the framework.

- Regular geometric and coherent design affects legibility of urban space. (Figure 1.1)

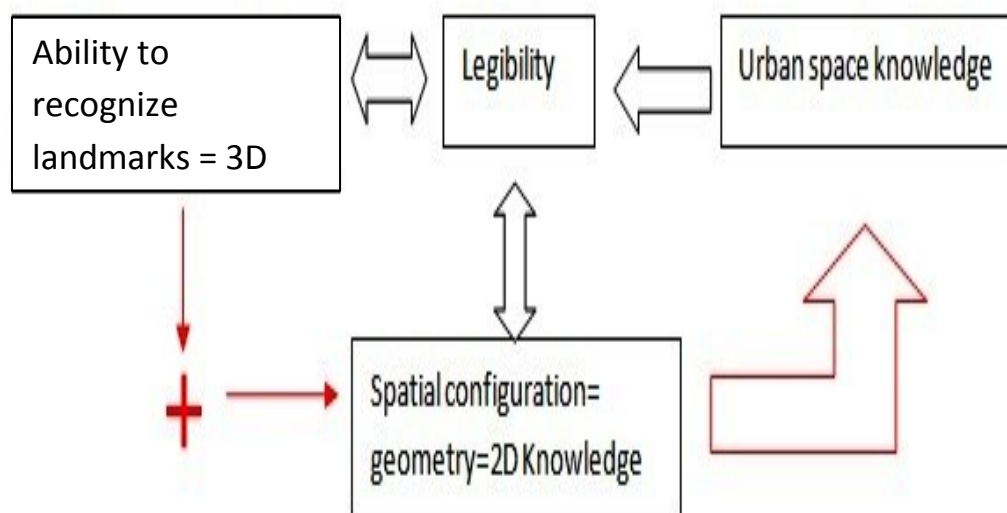


Figure1. 1 : Framework of relationship between legibility and configuration knowledge

- There is a positive relationship between regular geometry and viable cognitive map for visitors. (Figure 1.2)
- Regular geometry can reduce the stress of visitors in an unfamiliar space by ease of wayfinding. (Figure 1.2)

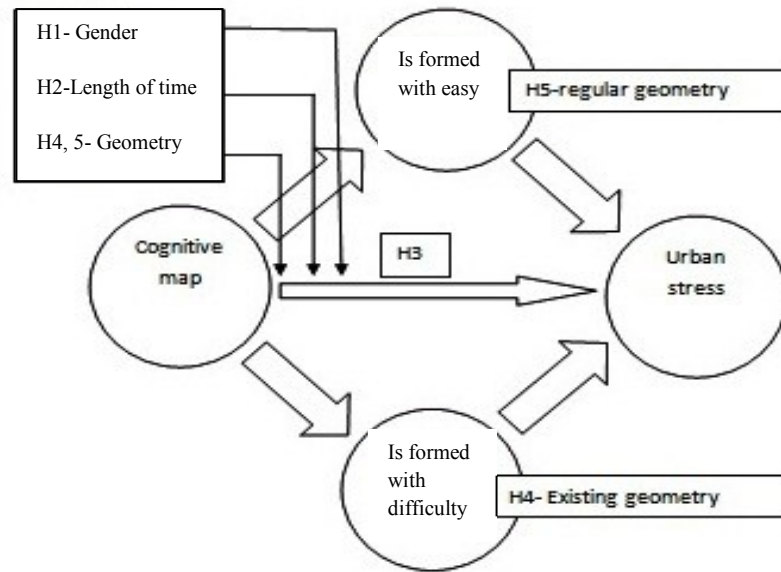


Figure1. 2 : Framework of relationship between cognitive map, geometry and stress

- Regular geometry may help to configure urban space for ease of wayfinding. (Figure 1.3)

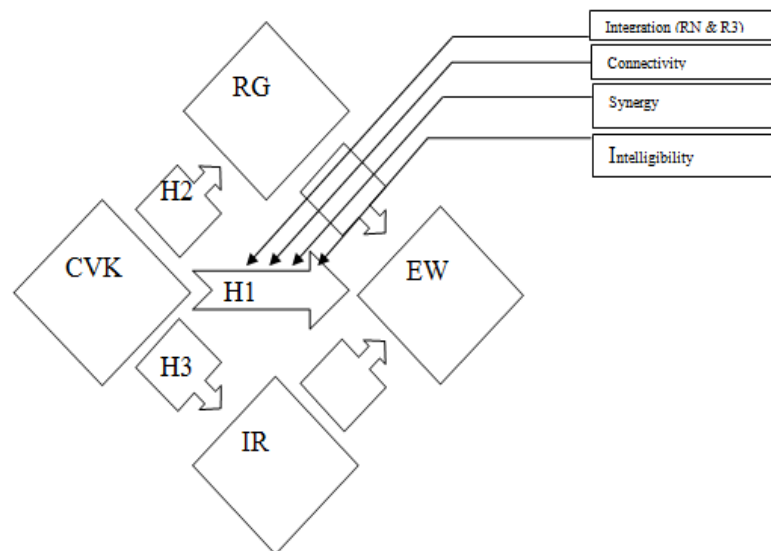


Figure1. 3: Framework of relationship between configuration of urban space and effective wayfinding

CVK: Configuration of vicinity of KLCC; RG: Regular Geometry; IG: Irregular Geometry; EF: Effective Wayfinding

1.8 Operational Framework of Study

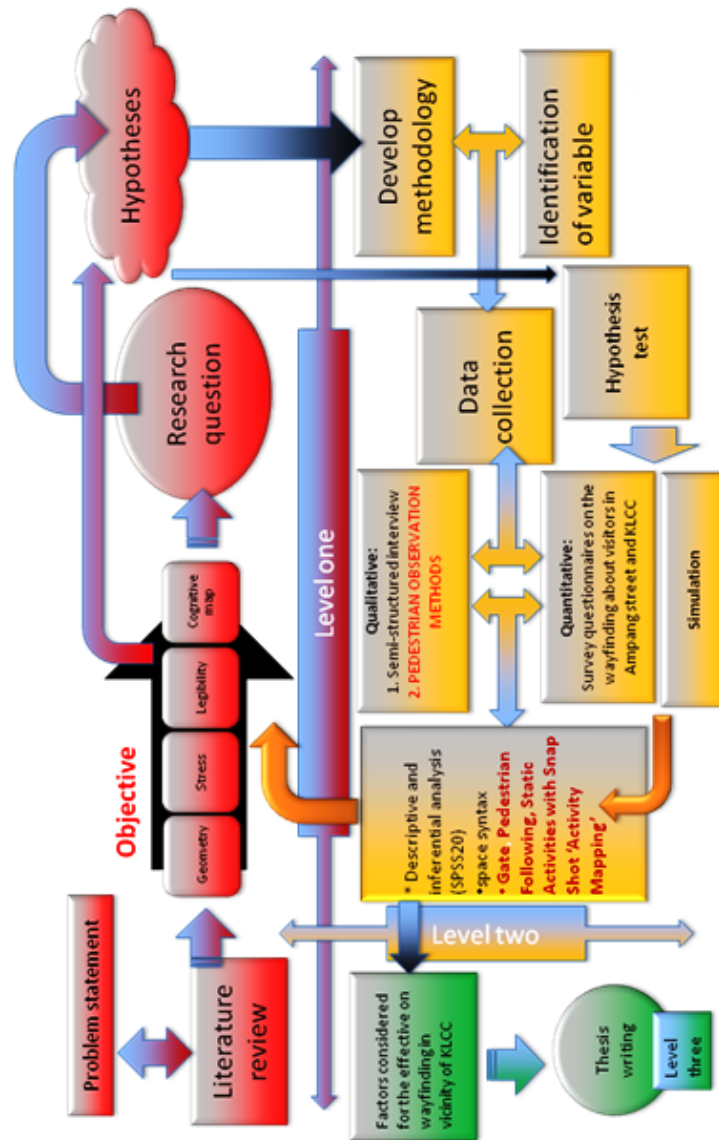


Figure 1. 4 : Operational framework of study

The diagram above illustrates the process of research undertaken.(Figure 1.4)

1.9 Significance of the Study

For different reasons, everyone has experienced disorientation and lack of recognition of environment and has felt the sensation of being lost, which is a stressful experience.

With the purpose of diversifying the economy and making it less reliant on exports, the Malaysia government has tried various plans and policies to stimulate the tourism industry (Munan, 2002). In 2014, tourist arrivals in Malaysia amounted to 27,437,315 people (Malaysia, 2015) a growth of 6.7% in comparison to 2013. Despite the economic crisis in 1998, tourist arrivals in Malaysia have been increasing consistently. Based on the same source, between 2007 and 2013, the number of arrivals has increased from 20.97 million to 25.72 million. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Malaysia has been listed as the 10th most visited country in 2012 (UNWTO, 2012).

Tang and Tan (2013, 2015) have examined the relation between tourism and economic growth and stability in Malaysia. Tang and Tan (2015) argued that the role of tourism for economic growth of Malaysia is a catalyst and policies to encourage inbound tourism can effectively stimulate economic growth.

Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020 (KLSP, 2004) claimed that the capital city, Kuala Lumpur has a unique tropical character and has a developed service sector and infrastructure with a wide range of tourist attractions. In this plan the vision for Kuala Lumpur is consistent with the national vision which is: Kuala Lumpur - A World-Class City. The second of five goals of this plan is “Goal 2: To create an efficient and equitable city structure” which is related to city configuration and city regeneration.

According to the evidence presented, a large amount of people today for various social, cultural, economic reasons are travelling to new places. It is clear

that city managers should pay close attention to visitors, including items that need to be addressed, such as wayfinding and stress. This study will discuss urban stress due to unfamiliar space and how it can be reduced.

Personal characteristics have been studied extensively, but physical characteristics and especially the relationships between personal and physical were rarely studied in psychological and urban areas (Cubukcu, 2003; Afrooz, 2009). Moreover, most studies focus on one variable but wayfinding involves many variables, such as landmarks, route pattern and architectural features, working simultaneously (Cubukcu, 2003). This study explores the simultaneous effect of personal and physical characteristics on wayfinding performance in vicinity of KLCC and focuses more on the physical characteristics. It addresses the relationship between wayfinding, legibility, cognitive map, geometry and stress.

One of the principles of wayfinding is the achievement of appropriate health standard goals (Cubukcu, 2003). It is surely very important in unfamiliar environments for visitors (Afrooz, 2009). People are rarely familiar with the environment when they are exploring a new destination. At this time disorientation has an effect on human life. Disorientation produces frustration, irritation, anxiety, and stress (Carpman and Grant, 2002).

This study is a practice in unfamiliar environment and finally gives a practical view of wayfinding and the impact of configuration of urban space on wayfinding in unfamiliar environment.

1.10 Scope of the Study

It is a fact that everyone experiences a new city or a new space. When new places include irregular geometry space it can be confusing. Visitors have no viable cognitive map and wayfinding to confront the problem. Sometimes visitors get lost and as a result they may become stressed.

Short term stress can be helpful but long term is harmful (Maslach, 2001). Questions to be asked include: Why do we feel stress in new spaces? How can we reduce the stress? This study was developed to answer these questions.

This study focused on the difficulties of pedestrian wayfinding in the vicinity of KLCC. The observations were made during the day. Night-time wayfinding was not studied. The differences of perception between genders were also not examined. Visitors who travelled by car or public transportation were excluded from this study as was navigation by computer, robot or any other independent or mechanical means.

1.11 Thesis Structure

This dissertation is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter 1 explains the overview of subject area. Chapter 2,3 and 4 explains the conceptual framework and background of the study. Chapter 5 describes the research method used. Chapter 6 explains and discusses the findings and results. Finally, in Chapter 7 the conclusion of the study is described followed by bibliography and five appendices. The following explains the action plan of each chapter.

Chapter 1: This chapter discusses the background of study and research gap. It details the objectives of the study coupled with the research questions and hypotheses to be addressed. It discusses scope, the study area, research design, and overall thesis structure, and prepared research basis for a literature review in chapter 2, 3 and 4.

Chapter 2, 3 and 4: It reviews and defines literature in the research area of concern related to each objective. In these chapters, the studies on effective elements of pedestrian wayfinding are reviewed forming the basis for the study conceptual framework such as geometry, stress, legibility, cognitive map as well as landmark and square. These chapters develop a systemic research concept

framework towards reliable research outcome that justify the need for this study and give a clear focus for the methodology to be applied in chapter 5 of the study.

Chapter 5: It presents research methodology in this study. It also defines how to collect data which is divided into four major types including survey questionnaire, interview, observation, and axial map as a behavioural mapping in order to examine the research objectives. It is followed by the types of analysis used in this research including descriptive analysis, inferential analysis and finally normality and reliability analysis as a confirmatory factor analysis and justifies the methodology in relation to the literature and research analysis framework used in chapter 6.

Chapter 6: It encompasses the findings of the research together with discussion. The findings are the factors which influence geometry in effective elements of wayfinding such as legibility, cognitive map and stress. Then, the findings are discussed in different aspects including “value of geometry to legibility and cognitive map”, “impact of regular geometry on cognitive map and urban stress”, “analyzing and comparing hypothetical model and existing space by space syntax”, and “syntactical analysis on accessible and sociable with square as a regular geometry”.

Chapter 7: It concludes the research findings in chapter 6, harvests researcher evidence in the reviewed literature in chapter 2, 3 and 4; and comprehensively arrived at formidable conclusions that intensely justify the study goal. It involves research implications with recommendations for goals of this study and further research in the related field.

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